

# George Brown News

A newsletter for staff, faculty and alumni of George Brown College

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## We're proud and committed says staff survey

The results of the 2006 full-time staff survey are in, and the news is good.

The vast majority of George Brown staff say they are committed to the college and its educational mission, proud of their own contributions to GBC's success, and see a wide array of improvements at the college—ranging from diversity to leadership.

Generally, the level of staff satisfaction has increased since the last staff questionnaire in 2004 with positive responses up five per cent or more for a majority of the 81 questions asked this time around.

"Having 100 per cent of staff happy about all aspects of the college is the ultimate goal," says Human Resources Executive Director, Nancy Hood. "We're not there yet, but the 2006 results are very positive and definitely moving in the right direction. And the important thing is that we continue to ask the questions so that we can continue to fix what needs fixing, so people have what they need to do their jobs well," she says.

Here are highlights of responses to some of the key statements tested in the survey:

- Overall, I am satisfied with my job at George Brown College: 71% agree.
- George Brown College makes available the resources I need for teaching and/or working in a diverse community: 71% agree (up from 60% in 2004).
- In my department, key decisions are made with the needs of students in mind: Nearly 70% of us agree.
- George Brown College provides sufficient relevant professional development opportunities for me to continuously improve: 71% agree (up from 62%).

Eighty-two per cent of us "are proud to work at George Brown College," and the same percentage knows about The Path to Leadership, and understand that it expresses the College's long term vision and mission.

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Brenda Pipitone, George Brown's Director of Community Partnerships, chats with Child and Youth Worker student Ruth Brago, who was part of the Pathways to Education program both in high school and at George Brown. George Brown has won a provincial award for the innovative partnership that helps students from the downtown Regent Park neighbourhood succeed academically.

## Winning partnership helps Regent Park students

George Brown has won a provincial award for an innovative partnership that helps students from the downtown Regent Park neighbourhood succeed at college.

It's the second year in a row that GBC has been awarded one of the coveted awards from the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO).

George Brown and the Pathways to Education Program in Regent Park are working collaboratively to ensure a successful transition to college for students who face academic, social and financial challenges.

"Pathways to Education is doing a remarkable job of helping students overcome tremendous odds to successfully complete high school," says Brenda Pipitone, George Brown's Director of Community Partnerships. "Now it's our job to welcome these students to college and support them so they can remain successful and graduate from George Brown."

Regent Park, now being rebuilt on its

original site east of Parliament St. and south of Gerrard St., is Canada's oldest and largest public housing project. The Pathways program supports at-risk teenagers to help them stay in high school and move on to postsecondary options by focusing on tutoring, mentoring, financial support and advocacy.

When the first 'class' of Pathways students were due to graduate from high school and enter postsecondary education in 2005, Pathways Mentoring Co-coordinator O'Neil Edwards went looking for post-secondary institutions that would partner with Pathways. He says George Brown was the most receptive.

For Pipitone, the timing was ideal. She had just started in her position as Director of Community Partnerships and her response was immediate. "As a college, we have a real desire to increase access to postsecondary education and to ensure success for students."

Since 2005, George Brown has worked

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## Regent Park partnership

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intensively with Pathways to provide a range of supports for the first two groups of Pathways graduates to make a successful transition to college. A hands-on, individual approach helps students with admissions, registration and financial arrangements. Other supports include customized orientation activities and jobs on campus. A targeted mentoring program and ongoing guidance help with the early identification of risks to academic success.

"We work collaboratively with Pathways to determine what supports will work best for the students," says Pipitone, who pulled together a team of college staff to connect with the students, track them, follow their academic progress and be a point of contact for them. "Now with the second group of students entering George Brown, we've formalized it a bit more by setting up a program where last year's first-year students are mentoring the new intake of students."

This year, the College held a welcome dinner for the second cohort of Pathways students—19 of them—providing them an opportunity to come to the college with their parents and siblings, have a tour of the campus, and meet some of the college staff and student mentors.

George Brown also now offers Pathways' Grade 11 and 12 students a college credit course called 'Speaking with Confidence'. The course allows students to earn a college credit before graduating from high school, and includes taking classes at George Brown to give participants a chance to experience the college environment.

"It's been an amazing collaboration," says Edwards of the partnership with George Brown. "We have students here who say they want to go to college, and so now that George Brown has made it possible for our students to go there, it's like this dream has suddenly become tangible and real."

Ruth Brago is a Pathways student. "Sometimes it's hard to believe, but it came true," says Brago, who is now a second-year student in the three-year Child and Youth Worker program at George Brown.

This year, Brago is trying to pass on some of the help that's been given to her by serving as a mentor for the new group of Pathways students enrolled at the college. "Like my mentor, want to show someone that care and help them to complete their education so they can help someone else later on," she says.



Social Service Worker student Lea Love was given a De La Salle scholarship which was created and is funded by Vince Thomson, right. Love says of the award: "Being chosen for this award motivates me to work even harder because someone believes in me and wants me to successfully complete my studies."

## Scholarship donations change lives

Generous donors make it possible for George Brown to give scholarships and awards to needy students—financial assistance that makes college possible, which can change their lives forever.

But don't just take our word for it—here's what GBC Social Service Worker student Lea Love has to say:

"I rely on O.S.A.P. and part-time earnings throughout the school year to pay for all my expenses. Last year I was awarded a De La Salle Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. Being chosen for this award motivates me to work even harder because someone believes in me and wants me to successfully complete my studies."

I completed the Pre-Community Service Program with Honours and I decided to continue my education at GBC because believe it is very important for me to "give back" to my community—to help build a stronger and caring society. I have had some terrific support over the years from wonderful Social Workers and I look forward to the future when I will be able to offer compassion, guidance and encouragement to individuals in need. I currently volunteer at the Distress Centres of Toronto on the phone lines, as well

as doing lay grief work with suicide survivors. My mother committed suicide when I was just 20 years old. I was unable to focus on my studies so I quit school. I had no guidance over the years except for my involvement with the helping profession which brings me full circle to where I am today. I am very proud of the person I have become and my goal is to be able to give others the same leadership, direction and caring help that I received.

Thank you so much for this financial gift which enables me to concentrate on my studies and is helping me achieve my career and life goals."

Giving a donation to student awards has its own rewards. But again, don't take our word for it, listen to Vince Thomson, who created and funds the De La Salle Award that Lea was given:

"George Brown College is an outstanding institution that offers first-rate education in various fields. I am very proud to be the creator and an on-going contributor to the De La Salle Scholarship fund that helps students who need financial assistance. Jean Baptiste De La Salle has been the biggest inspiration of my life. Until this time, only people who could afford education were

## Awards to recognize staff who "live" our Academic Strategy

George Brown staff can give their hard-working colleagues a mid-winter boost by nominating them for a new college award.

First are the Live it Up! Awards designed to recognize those who make the principles of George Brown's Academic Strategy come alive at the college.

Live it Up! starts with a simple premise:

George Brown staff should be recognized for putting into practice the four values of the Academic Strategy (Student Learning First, Learning Community, Diversity and Internationalization, and Innovation and Scholarship) as they go about their daily work. The awards are unlimited in number and open to faculty, support staff and administrators. Winners, nominees and nominators will be honoured at a reception and be recognized in a special edition of the Quick e newsletter.

Nomination forms will be posted on insite and can be e-mailed to [asi@georgebrown.ca](mailto:asi@georgebrown.ca) or via interoffice mail to "Live it Up c/o of the Office of Academic Excellence" Tuesday, March 27 2007

Also new are Leadership in Faculty Teaching (LIFT) Awards. Offered by the provincial government, up to 100 of the LIFT awards will be presented in 2007 each with a \$20,000 prize, given out over two years.

The Ontario government opened nominations for the LIFT Award to recognize teaching excellence at Ontario colleges and universities. Nominations close February 28, 2007. You can learn more and download a nomination package at [ontario.ca/facultyawards](http://ontario.ca/facultyawards).

## Staff survey (continued from page 1)

The survey results will be put to good use, helping to identify several broad areas that will be the focus for improvement over the coming year. Actions for increasing staff satisfaction will be part of various college and divisional plans as we go forward. "For example, divisions are being asked to examine their specific survey results with the view to helping staff answer the question: 'What can we, as individuals do to continue building a stronger and more positive learning and working environment where students and staff are valued and engaged,'" says Hood.

In all, 648, or 52% of full-time staff and partial faculty members completed the survey. Part-time and sessional employees were surveyed separately in 2005.

The complete results of the 2006 survey can be found on insite in the HR section.



George Smitherman, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, checks the condition of one of the college's six new sophisticated mannequins at the opening of George Brown's new health sciences applied learning centre on Feb. 5. On hand to help is Health Science and Community Services Dean Lorie Shekter-Wolfson (centre) and Practical Nursing student Shannon Ristaski. The mannequins mimic human reactions to treatment and medication.

## New health science simulation lab opens

George Smitherman, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, unveiled six sophisticated high-tech mannequins at the opening of George Brown's new health sciences applied learning centre on Feb. 5.

The new state-of-the-art Simulated Practice Centre (SPC) at St. James Campus mirrors actual in-patient facilities found in hospitals and catapults the college's Health Sciences faculty to the forefront of health education in Canada.

George Brown is using a team-based, interdisciplinary approach where students from all its health sciences programs will work together to see how their roles interact and influence the care they give to the life-like mannequins. This experience will better prepare them to work in a health-care system that is evolving to improve patient care through a more collaborative approach—an approach GBC is at the forefront of.

The purchase of the high-tech mannequins was made possible through a grant of more than \$600,000 as part of a larger contribution made by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to the collaborative nursing education venture involving George Brown, Ryerson University and Centennial College. GBC matched the government funds to complete the \$1.2 million SPC project, which along with the mannequins, involved extensive renovations and expansion to a former nursing lab.

"The government is pleased to support today's health-care students; to prepare them for caring for tomorrow's patients," said Smitherman. "By using new technology and

promoting an inter-disciplinary approach in the health sciences programs, we are better preparing graduates to provide quality health care for Ontarians."

The mannequins that serve as patients are essential to the faculty's collaborative teaching approach. Programmable, they experience changes in heart rate, blood pressure and breathing, all of which can be monitored by students in the traditional manner. The mannequins react to injections and can "speak" with the help of an instructor in an adjoining video broadcast room.

During Smitherman's visit, students demonstrated care for a mannequin in medical distress. The "patient" was treated by a team of health-care students from George Brown's Nursing, Activation Coordinator and Personal Support Worker programs, alongside second-year University of Toronto medical students from St. Michael's Hospital. The innovative partnership with St. Michael's helps create an authentic health-care setting by involving students representing many of the health professions.

"The education of health sciences students is evolving along with the changing health-care system," said Lorie Shekter-Wolfson, Dean of GBC's Community Services and Health Sciences. "By introducing the Interprofessional Learning Clinic and the Simulated Practice Centre we are narrowing the gap between the theoretical learning of our students and the practical experience they'll gain in actual work settings. In this way, they'll be catalysts for changing the system so that it that delivers better patient care."

### **Q: You were recently in India with the Premier as part of an Ontario India Trade Mission. Why was GBC involved with the trip?**

George Brown was pleased to be invited to join Premier McGuinty on his trade mission to India in January. You may recall that GBC took part in a similar trip to China in November 2005. The missions are excellent opportunities to cement and expand existing international relationships, explore new ones, and to build stronger ties with the provincial government. Such trips are also fundamental in supporting our international and internationalization strategies.

I was joined on the India trip by our Vice President of International & Applied Research, Joy McKinnon, and Maureen Loweth, Dean of the Faculty of Business and Creative Arts. The province's goals for the mission were to develop new bilateral trade opportunities between Ontario and India—specifically in the areas of financial services, research and innovation, infrastructure development, education, the cultural industries and in information and communications technologies (ICT).

The vast size of India's economy is remarkable

and the particular importance put on higher education in that country is clearly of interest to us as we expand our international reach. Their needs are significant and we are well positioned to help address those needs.

As you may know, our connections with India are not new. GBC has been exploring opportunities there since the year 2001.

Two new agreements were finalized and signed while we were in India. One is with Chitkara Educational Trust in Food and Beverage and Hotel Management, and another with the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition in Mumbai, for Chef Training. These programs will allow Indian students to gain dual credentials from GBC and their home schools, while also gaining international experience by coming to George Brown. The signing of Mumbai agreement was an official event of the trade mission and involved key government officials from both countries. Both agreements received considerable media attention in India.

Overall, the trip was very productive, and successful from a number of perspectives. Our involvement helped us demonstrate, face-to-face, our support for the Premier and his cabinet colleagues and build on

those relationships. We were also able to identify new opportunities through other trade mission participants. We are pursuing these now. The trip gave GBC the opportunity to showcase the College and the work we've been doing in India. And finally we were able to experience many of India's cultural dimensions, which helps us better understand and appreciate our own student body's multi-cultural background.

For me, personally, the trip held many highlights. Among the most memorable, however, was the opportunity to meet with a group of Chitkara students who will be coming to George Brown in September, 2008 as part of the first articulation agreement we signed with that school in the spring of last year. The students, who will ultimately graduate with dual computer technology credentials from GBC and Chitkara, are bright, focused and enthusiastic about their unique educational opportunity.

In the end, the greatest outcome of our involvement with trade missions, of our international strategies, and, indeed, of everything we do, is the positive impact it has on our students as we help them become graduates whose skills will be valued wherever in the world their careers take them.

## Scholarship donations (continued from page 1)

taught by tutors. He is responsible for making education more accessible and George Brown College is part of this noble pursuit."

Each of us at George Brown can make a difference in the lives of our students with a financial contribution that will have a double impact. Through the Ontario Trust for Student Support (OTSS) program, contributions to student endowments are matched dollar for dollar by the Government of Ontario—which doubles the impact of your contribution to student success. The money raised supports an endowment, which generates annual

student awards in perpetuity, with annual interest distributed in the form of bursaries, scholarships and entrance awards to students who are in financial need. These awards open doors to an education, to a career and to a promising future.

Many George Brown staff have already made donations and pledged their support. Donations have been made to existing endowments and new ones have been established to honour special milestones or create memorial tributes to staff and faculty. For example, many GBC staff contributed to

the Frank Sorochinsky Bursary Endowment, and last March, the Joes Abes Memorial Endowment was established to commemorate the 20-year teaching career of the Hospitality professor.

In the coming weeks, staff will get more information about how they can make a difference, through a donation, in a student's life—students like Leá who are determined to use their skills and knowledge gained at college to forge positive futures for themselves, and others.

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